

Application No. 09/672330

Amendment

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In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A process for producing a balloon comprising:
- (a) axially stretching an extruded tubing segment made of a polymer material while pressurizing the tubing at an internal pressure above ambient pressure, to produce a stretched parison, the tubing segment having a first ~~ID~~ internal diameter and the polymer material having a glass transition temperature above ambient temperature, and then
- (b) blowing the balloon by expanding the stretched parison in a mold at a temperature above said glass transition temperature,

wherein said axially stretching comprises ~~a~~ the step (a)(i) of subjecting the tubing to a temperature and internal pressure which is sufficient to expand the ~~ID~~ internal diameter of at least a portion ~~A~~ (A) of the stretched parison to a second ~~ID~~ internal diameter greater than the first ~~ID~~ internal diameter.

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A 2. (original) A process as in claim 1 wherein the polymer material includes a polymer selected from the group consisting of olefin/ionomer copolymers; polyesters; polyamides; polyurethanes; polyetheretherketone; polycarbonates; poly(meth)acrylates; maleate polymers; and block copolymers having polyester or polyamide segments.

3. (original) A process as in claim 1 wherein the polymer material includes a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyamide/polyether/polyester, polyamide/polyether, and polyester/polyether block copolymers; ethylene terephthalate polymers and copolymers; butylene terephthalate polymers and copolymers; ethylene naphthalate polymers and copolymers; and polyamides.

4. (original) A process as in claim 1 wherein said extruded tubing segment is formed of a single layer of polymer material.

5. (currently amended) A process as in claim 1 wherein said extruded tubing segment is formed ~~up~~ of at least two layers of polymer material.

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6. (currently amended) A process as in claim 1 wherein the balloon comprises a body portion having proximal and distal ends; proximal and distal cone portions, the cone portions being respectively located adjacent the respective proximal and distal ends of the balloon body; and proximal and distal waist portions adjacent the respective proximal and distal cone portions, and wherein, in step (b), said portion (A) A of the stretched parison forms at least the balloon body.

7. (currently amended) A process as in claim 6 wherein the stretched parison comprises a second portion (~~B1~~) B1 having an ID which is not greater than the first ~~ID~~ internal diameter and in step (b) one of the waist portions of the balloon is formed from said portion (~~B1~~) B1.

8. (currently amended) A process as in claim 7 wherein said axial stretching further comprises a the step (a)(ii), of forming said stretched parison portion (~~B1~~) B1 by reducing a portion of the extruded tubing segment to an ~~ID~~ internal diameter less than said first ~~ID~~ internal diameter prior to said step (a)(i).

9. (currently amended) A process as in claim 7 wherein portion (~~B1~~) B1 of the stretched parison forms the distal waist portion of the balloon, and the stretched parison comprises a third portion (B2) having an ID which is not greater than the first ~~ID~~ internal diameter, and in step (b) the proximal waist portion of the balloon is formed from said portion (~~B1~~) B1.

10. (currently amended) A process as in claim 9 wherein said axial stretching further comprises the a step (a)(ii), of forming at least one of said stretched parison portion (~~B1~~) B1 and (~~B2~~) B2 by necking down a portion of the extruded tubing segment to an ID less than said first ~~ID~~ internal diameter.

11. (original) A process as in claim 7 wherein said step (a)(ii) is performed at a pressure or temperature which is less than the pressure and temperature employed in step (a)(i).

12. (original) A process as in claim 1 wherein in step (a)(i) the pressure is in the range of 25-1000 psi (172-6894 kPa) and the temperature is in the range of 15-60 °C.

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13. (cancelled)
